

## Message Text

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ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY NEA:AR DAY:TH

APPROVED BY S:THE SECRETARY

NEA:ALATHERTON, JR.

S/S - O:DLMACK

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 080366

NODIS

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, IS, US

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION

REF: TEL AVIV 2301

1. I VERY MUCH APPRECIATED YOUR EXCELLENT ASSESSMENT OF ISRAELI MOTIVATIONS IN THE CURRENT LEBANESE SITUATION. IT IS ENCOURAGING TO HEAR THAT THERE MAY BE A GREATER UNDERSTANDING WITHIN THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT THAT FRUSTRATION OF THE SYRIAN PURPOSES IN LEBANON COULD WORK, AND PROBABLY WOULD WORK, AGAINST ISRAEL'S BEST INTERESTS. WHILE A CEASEFIRE IS NOW IN EFFECT THERE, IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT THE QUESTION OF SYRIAN INTERVENTION WILL AGAIN BECOME CRITICAL. ASAD BELIEVES, AND WE ARE INCLINED TO AGREE WITH HIM, THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN THE CEASEFIRE THROUGH A PERIOD OF MAJOR POLITICAL MOVEMENT AND INTENSE POLITICAL MANEUVERING WITHOUT ANY CENTRAL FORCE TO IMPOSE ORDER. IT SEEMS ALL TOO LIKELY THAT THE LEFTISTS, AWARE OF

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THEIR MILITARY SUPERIORITY AT THE MOMENT, WILL DEMAND

MAJOR POLITICAL/ECONOMIC CHANGES IN THEIR FAVOR AND  
WILL RENEW THE FIGHTING IF THEY BELIEVE IT NECESSARY  
TO PUT ON MORE PRESSURE.

2. THIS PROJECTION NOTWITHSTANDING, HOWEVER, WE ARE STILL  
CONCERNED THAT SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION WOULD BRING  
WITH IT VERY SERIOUS RISKS OF ISRAELI COUNTERMOVES. I  
AGREE THAT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO REDUCE THIS RISK BY THE  
MEANS YOU SUGGEST, BUT THERE COULD CERTAINLY BE NO  
ASSURANCE THAT WE WOULD SUCCEED IN RESTRAINING ISRAEL.  
WE VERY MUCH HOPE THEREFORE, THAT THE SYRIANS, WITH  
OUR HELP NOW THAT DEAN BROWN IS ON THE SCENE, CAN WORK  
OUT THE POLITICAL EVOLUTION WITHOUT THE NEED FOR  
ADDITIONAL FORCE. ANY KIND OF SYRIAN PEACE-KEEPING  
FORCE WOULD BE A VERY LAST RESORT.

3. YOU SHOULD CONSIDER THE ABOVE THOUGHTS FOR YOUR  
INFORMATION ONLY AT THIS POINT, BUT I WOULD APPRECIATE  
ANY FURTHER COMMENT YOU MAY HAVE, AS THE SITUATION  
DEVELOPS, ON ISRAELI REACTIONS TO WHAT IS HAPPENING  
IN LEBANON AND ON THEIR LIKELY RESPONSE TO ANY FURTHER  
INTRODUCTION OF SYRIAN FORCE.

4. IN THE LATTER CONNECTION DINITZ REPORTED TO ME THIS  
MORNING THAT THE ISRAELIS HAD INFORMATION OF A SYRIAN  
COMMANDO BATTALION HAVING BEEN INTRODUCED INTO TRIPOLI.  
THE INFORMATION WAS SENT TO US BY ALLON, WHO ASKED THAT  
WE TAKE SOME ACTION ON THE MATTER. OUR ESTIMATE THAT  
THE ISRAELIS, IN DOING THIS, ARE TRYING TO MAKE A RECORD  
FOR HOME CONSUMPTION IS FORTIFIED BY A DAVAR STORY FROM  
DAVAR'S WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT BARNEA TO THE EFFECT  
THAT ISRAEL HAS WARNED SYRIA THREE TIMES, VIA THE U.S.,  
AGAINST INTERVENTION IN LEBANON. WE ASSUME THIS CAME  
FROM ISRAELI SOURCES AND WE ARE WARNING THE ISRAELI  
GOVERNMENT THROUGH DINITZ AGAINST MAKING THIS KIND OF  
POLITICAL CAPITAL OUT OF A SITUATION AS EXPLOSIVE AS  
THAT IN LEBANON. YOU SHOULD MAKE THE SAME POINT. KISSINGER

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic DecapTIONing:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, INTERVENTION, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, CAT-C  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 03 APR 1976  
**DecapTION Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**DecapTION Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** buchant0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976STATE080366  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** ARDAY:TH  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** P840093-1824  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t197604100/aaaadifr.tel  
**Line Count:** 98  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN NODS  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** NODIS  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** NODIS  
**Reference:** 76 TEL AVIV 2301  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** buchant0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 16 JUN 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <16 JUN 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <07 OCT 2004 by buchant0>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** LEBANESE SITUATION  
**TAGS:** PFOR, MPOL, LE, IS, US, SY  
**To:** TEL AVIV  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006